



Supporting Young Women & Girls Affected by County Line Exploitation

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”I have realised that being in a gang is not worth it, and definitely not what I deserve in life. I now know that I am worth so much more than that.”

‘We literally call young people “trappers” because they're trapped. We call it “surviving”. We are living this life but we didn't choose to be there. The meaning is within the words but the professionals fail to see that.’

Young Women Consultants 2021

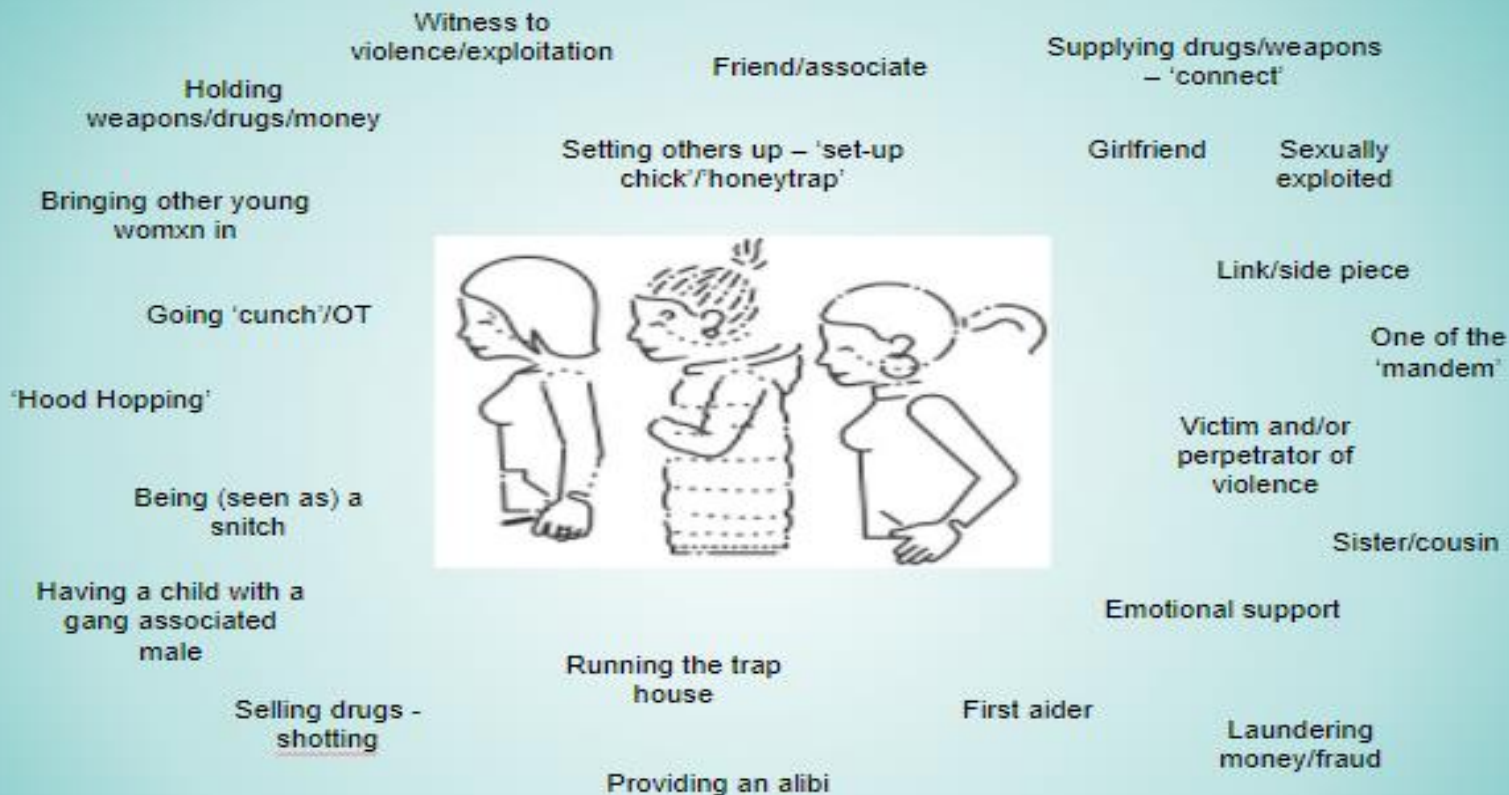




Understanding The “Roles”/Experiences Of Young Women In County Lines Activity



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“Victim” vs. “Perpetrator”

- The problems for service provisions who often work with one or the other.
- The barriers in accessing support
- Not the traditional ‘victim’ profile
- Hidden vulnerability
- Adultification



Exploitation

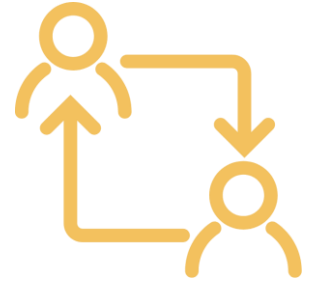


To consider some of the ways in which girls and young women experience exploitation within these contexts.

- DEBT BONDAGE
- TRAFFICKING
- SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



National Referral Mechanism (NRM)



“Victims may not be aware that they are being trafficked or exploited, and may have consented to elements of their exploitation, or accepted their situation. If you think that modern slavery has taken place, the case should be referred to the NRM so that the relevant competent authority can fully consider the case. You do not need to be certain that someone is a victim.”

Govt: National referral mechanism guidance: adult (England and Wales)



REFERRAL DATA FOR YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS

Since the Rescue and Response project began in 2018 to June 2022, we have **received 333 referrals** for young women. The average number of referrals for young women is 20.8 per quarter (since project start). The proportion of referrals for females has increased from 15% in 2020/21 to 19% in 2021/22. The following information is based on information known to the referrer at the point of referral.

78%

of referrals received were for under 18s

The ratio of female referrals by gender for the whole project period is

16%

132

Referrals received were for women and girls who were looked after child or leaving care

148

Referrals received were for women and girls who were a regular missing person

158

Referrals received were for women and girls who had a CSE risk category

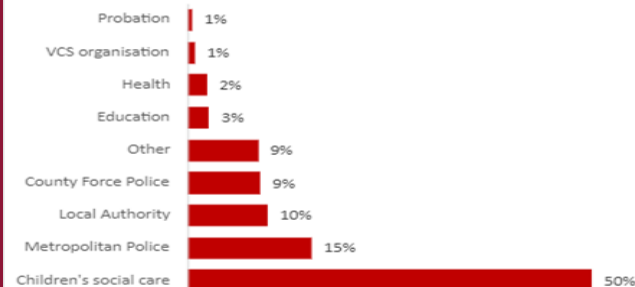
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Referrals received were for women and girls reported to be pregnant

13

Referrals received were for women and girls who had children

Referrals for young women and girls by referring agency



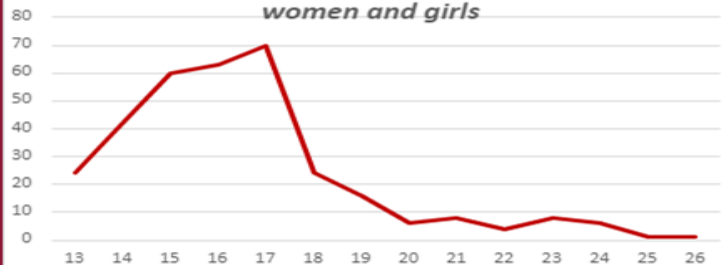
SPOTLIGHT YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS



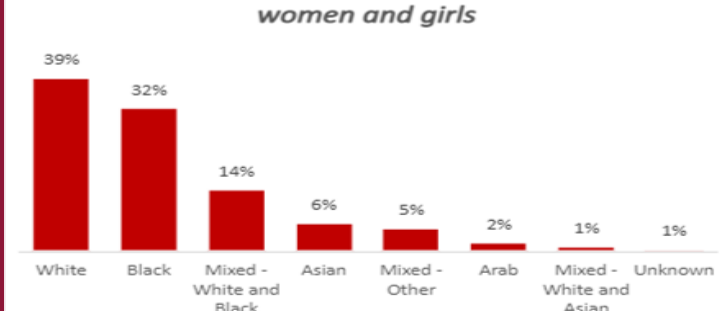
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OBSERVATIONS AND LEARNING

Age breakdown of referrals for young women and girls



Ethnicity breakdown of referrals for young women and girls





Tools To Identify Young Women Exploited Through County Lines



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Why Are Young Women Less Likely To Be Identified?



- Gender Bias
- CSE as Prime Focus
- Professionals waiting for Missing Episodes
- More Likely to 'Fly Under The Radar'
- Young Women may not Self Identify as Being a Part of a 'Gang'



Identifying Young Women



- Be conscious in thinking of Young Women
- Relationship Mapping
- Hot Spots
- Their presentation in school/other settings





Engaging With “Gang” Affected Girls To Ensure They Have An Input In The Design Of Services



We believe
that:

- Young women & girls are **experts on their own lives**.
- Young women & girls have **innate resources**, competence and resilience.
- People affected by a problem are **best placed to find the solutions**.
- We must **shift traditional power hierarchies** in service delivery in order to enable young women's participation in solution building.
- We must support young women & girls to have their **voices heard** in order that they can influence the design and delivery of services.



Knowledge

Skills

Attitudes

Of YW involved w/gangs & what that means to them	Confidentiality, time keeping, listening	Should be option of female worker
Even if she has committed a crime, chances are she is a victim first	Be patient and persistent, don't close the door	First impressions are key
Know you will do all within your power to protect YW	Investigate before you take action	Sympathy, empathy – what if it was your child?
Help develop skills and to know' how to protect herself	Long term relationship	Build link and share experiences – talk to us like we are human
The right spaces to meet & anonymous calls	Get to know person rather than 'gang issues'	Negatives/problems should not be the main focus
Know/consider who YW can/can't speak in front of	Gain trust – without being seen as 'snitches'	Ask YW what she wants - don't assume you know
Offer services and resources	Speak with YW. Get right answer & explanations	Be professionals but not 'professional'
Knowing what will make things dangerous for YW	Tell YW when and why info will be shared	Don't force YW to talk about her own experiences
Know what to report and what not to – when to share information and what	Communicating with YW	Talk about YW generally – more comforting. Use 3 rd . person
Don't use YW to get intelligence for police	Clear explanations about things	Make it safer to be in space/service: not in police station
Who might have power over her – even if sexual exploitation isn't the primary issue?	How can you help YW? What will they get out of it?	How are you thinking about young women? Positively or negatively? We can tell!
Know the right language – make sure you don't sound like you are blaming her or judging her	Focus on her future – what does she want life to be like?	Non-judgmental & patronizing. Don't just go on what you have read in a file or been told about a young woman
	When confronted with gang-involved males, always ask the question: 'who are the young women connected to him?'	Don't approach us with your defences up or 'on the attack'

Shifting the central question



From:

What is she doing wrong?

To:

How has she managed to survive?





Training “Front-Line” Staff To Recognise And Respond To The Issues Facing Young Women Exploited By County Lines



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Barriers To Accessing Services

SOCIETAL	RELATIONAL	INDIVIDUAL
Lack of professional awareness	Being seen as a 'snitch'	Normalisation of experiences.
Fear of being criminalised	Exploiters not wanting her to accessing support services	"Invisibility" of girls and young women
Implications for her family: fear her children will be taken away	Multiple perpetrators	Fear they won't be kept safe
Limited services for the transitions age range (18-24).	Coercive and controlling relationships .	Distrust of services
Male dominated spaces	Family involvement	Unsure how their personal information will be used
Professional's attitudes	May be caught between two rival gangs	Loss of protection

Abianda Training



- As part of the MOPAC Rescue and Response project we can offer FREE training on 'Girls, "Gangs" and County Lines.
- Beyond London we can offer training for a charge
- We can be commissioned to deliver training to your team
- Case Consultations



Let Us Support You

Get in touch to refer young women, for case consultations and training delivery

More information here: <http://abianda.com/training/>

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